

**OUTGOING
TELEGRAM**

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☐ CHARGE TO

Department of State

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March 14, 1959

12 midnight

**SECRET
PRESIDENTIAL HANDLING**

SENT TO: Amembassy PARIS 3389 PRIORITY

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REF: RMETEL 3357

Following is text of message from President to President de Gaulle, replying to latter's letter of March 12, for delivery soonest. Advise date and time delivery.

QUOTE March 14, 1959. Dear General de Gaulle: I have received and read with great care your letter of March 12 and wish to reply immediately to express my gratification at having this expression of your views.

Your analysis of the artificial crisis precipitated by the announced intentions of the Soviets to change the status of Berlin, and the existing arrangements for our access to Berlin seems to me to sum up the situation admirably. More than two million people in West Berlin look to us for the protection of their continued safety and welfare. We could not think of risking our honor by accepting, under the threat of force, conditions which would undermine our ability to fulfill our

Drafted by:

EUR:Mr. Merchant

3/14/59

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

Robert H. Miller, Duty Officer

Clearances:

The President (in draft) DC/MR

The Acting Secretary (in draft)

REVIEWED by

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commitment to the people of Berlin. Our rights are clear. I share your view that if force is used to oppose our exercise of these rights, the world will know precisely who in this controversy first resorted to force to settle a dispute. The more we and you and our NATO allies are firm and united, the less chance it seems to me that we shall run the risk of dangerous Soviet counteraction.

As you say, there is every reason to convoke a conference of Foreign Ministers, and to let such a conference run on while both sides exhaustively canvass possibilities for solution. We should not commit ourselves to go to a "summit" conference until there was some promise that such a conference could, in fact, yield satisfying results. I am communicating these same considerations, which appear of major political importance to me, to Prime Minister Macmillan.

The reunification of Germany would effectively remove from Central Europe the main cause of tension there. Other important political consequences, which we would all welcome, would undoubtedly follow in its train. This happy event, as you suggest, is not likely to occur very soon, and I agree entirely that in the interim contacts between the two parts of Germany should be encouraged. I would here only enter a note of caution, with which I am sure you would agree, that, for many reasons, contacts

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tacts which risk enhancing the position and prestige of the Soviet puppet government should be minimized.

In discussing the Berlin crisis and the difficult situation in Germany, the vital importance of the continued strength and unity of our NATO alliance inevitably also comes to my mind. I am sure you will of course agree that our common defenses must be maintained at maximum effectiveness if we are to deal with the Soviets with the firmness which both you and I desire. I believe we should proceed on this score calmly and purposefully. We should not take hasty measures designed superficially to build up our defenses which would only be interpreted as a sign of fear on our part, nor should we do anything to weaken our defenses, or make moves ~~which~~ could be interpreted as weakness or lack of determination. In addition to maintaining our military strength, we must also maintain a spirit of common political purpose among all members of the Alliance. Otherwise we will increase our vulnerability to Soviet efforts to divide us. Everything possible should be done to ensure that the military strength and political unity of the Alliance are maintained. With reference to another portion of your letter, I am gratified to note that your views on the subject of "disengagement" are very close to my own. We have, as you know, felt that a technical approach to the problem of surprise attack, with measures

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with measures not confined to a narrow or limited area, would be a worthwhile next step in the disarmament field. Unfortunately, the conference with the Soviets on this matter at Geneva last fall made it clear that their approach to the problem was completely unacceptable. The Soviet proposals would have led to the creation of a narrow demilitarized zone in Central Europe without any real assurance that the danger of surprise attack would be reduced. I continue to hope, of course, that it will be possible to make progress in the disarmament field, but I fully agree with you that we cannot accept measures which would jeopardize our basic security interests.

I also wished to refer briefly to our previous correspondence regarding a closer tripartite relationship among France, Great Britain and ourselves. I believe, as you expressed last month to Secretary Dulles in Paris, that these talks have already begun to serve a useful purpose. We, for our part, are disposed to continue these talks, and I am gratified that a date has been set early next month for the next meetings in this series.

I will be discussing these vital subjects, particularly those concerning Germany, with Prime Minister Macmillan next week and will, of course, keep in mind during these talks your cogently expressed ideas. In the light of these talks I will write to you again to give you my appreciation of the situation

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and actions which we might wish to take. It is essential that we seek common accord and that our mutual strengths be concerted. These private exchanges of views can contribute importantly to that end.

Please accept, Mr. President, the expression of my highest consideration and sincere friendship.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER. UNQUOTE

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